

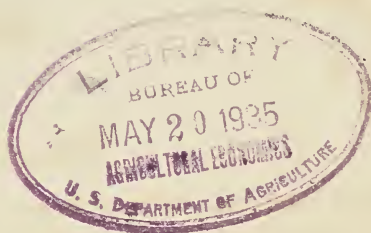
Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

196
5039E
United States
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Soil Erosion Service

Penalty for Private
Use to Avoid Pay-
ment of Postage
\$300.00

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



U. S. Department of the Interior

Soil Erosion Service

Elm Creek Watershed -- Central Texas

NEWS LETTER

No. 1

June, 1934

Area To Be Worked

Never has the farmer been recognized by the U.S. Government as he is today, and never has a group of farmers had the opportunity to control erosion on their farms with as little outlay of expense as the farmers who are located in the Elm Creek Watershed. The Central Texas Project embraces the Elm Creek Watershed, an area of approximately 200,000 acres. North and South Elm, two of the largest branches of Big Elm, are not being worked at this time, however, and for this reason the area of the Watershed is cut down to approximately 106,000 acres. It is probable that North and South Elm will be included in the project later. Any farm lying in the area described, that is, the farms whose waters finally reach Big Elm, are eligible to the benefits and the work being done by the Soil Erosion Service.

Aims of the Soil Erosion Service

The Soil Erosion Service aims to cooperate with the owners of all farms in the Elm Creek Watershed in controlling erosion. This project is really a demonstration, showing the farmers, not only in this area but in adjoining areas, the most practical and the best ways of protecting the farms from washing.

Erosion control embraces not only a terracing program in order to hold the soil on sloping lands, but it serves the purpose of protecting rich bottom lands from deposits of poor, worthless soil from the uplands, and hillsides, and will control to a great extent, the silting up of stream channels and reservoirs, and if the majority of farmers in this area take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to save their farms and make them more valuable, it should demonstrate that the flooding of Big Elm can be controlled to some extent by holding the waters on the hillsides and letting it flow slowly to the bottom lands. The Soil Erosion Service will also be helpful to the farmers in making necessary adjustments in land use practices which may be necessary for a more economically sound farm program, considering the many "new deals" and this new era in agriculture.

Methods Being Used in Controlling Erosion

Most of us think that erosion can be controlled only by terracing, and in most cases, of course, terracing is essential in the cultivated fields in this Blackland area, however, vegetation is no doubt the best and most permanent means of erosion control. With this in mind, the Soil Erosion Service is helping the farmers in this area to plan their farms in such a way that permanent pastures may be established on the more steeply sloping hillsides and also locating them where terraces may spill on pasture land, which eliminates costly structures and at the same time will help irrigate grass in pasture land. Most of the farms in the Blackland section do not have nearly as much area in

pasture as an economically sound farm program calls for. The Soil Erosion Service is trying some fifteen different grasses on about sixty different farms hoping to find a good perennial pasture grass that will do well in this area, in addition to those that we are already familiar with. It is known that a good permanent pasture mixture for this area is Bermuda, Rescue, Italian Rye and Bur Clover, or Black Medie. These grasses will furnish good pasturage from eight to ten months in the year if properly handled. The Bermuda grass is a summer grass, the Rescue grass and Rye grass are winter grasses or early spring grasses and the Bur Clover and Black Medie are late spring grasses. Dallis grass, we know, does well where enough moisture is available but it seems to be extremely difficult to get this grass established and to get the seed to germinate, as the germination percentage is very low.

Protection of Terrace Outlets, Terrace Outlet Ditches and Control and Revegetation of Gullies

Large gullies in fields and pastures are being controlled by sloping the banks, sodding and building of temporary check dams, of stake or woven wire, in the bottom to hold the loose soil which has been pushed in until vegetation becomes established.

All of us have seen examples of places where terraces have been built without protecting the outlets and the result has been that gullies

are eating back along the terraces into the fields and this has possibly made some of you hesitate to terrace. However, the Soil Erosion Service is now available to help you prevent this condition at the end of terraces which drop off into deep ditches. Permanent structures of concrete and rock masonry are being built wherever needed, in order to control terrace outlets and terrace outlet ditches or gullies which are used as permanent waterways. It is desirable to have your terrace outlet ditch on your farm, so that you can assure yourself that the structure will be maintained. If you allow your terrace to drain into the county road ditch and structures are built to protect your outlets you have no way of knowing that the structures will stay in place. In maintaining the road the grader might take the dirt from the wing wall of the structure and cause the water to go around it and wash it out, and then complete protection of that terrace outlet will be lost and it is possible that all of the dams above may be washed out because of the loss of this one structure.

A Few Suggestions if You Are Interested In Protecting Your Farm

The Soil Erosion Service is furnishing experienced men to plan your farm. It is furnishing the graders for the terraces. It is helping bear the expense of the terraces which are actually built on YOUR farm. It is furnishing seed, or the sod, for permanent pastures for the areas being taken out of cultivation. It is controlling the gullies, bearing all the expenses including labor and material. It is protecting your terrace outlets with no expense to you whatsoever. If you are not thoroughly

familiar with the plans of the Soil Erosion Service in helping you to improve your farm, and if you would like to discuss any of your farm problems, the Soil Erosion Service invites and urges you to write for additional information or contact us at the office in the Fletcher Building, Temple, Texas. Meetings will be held in the area from time to time and it is suggested that you watch the local newspapers for schedule of meetings and that you attend one of these meetings if possible. A meeting was held at Flag Hall near Zabcikville on June 6th, at which time an erosion group was organized with the following officers elected.

H.M. Jakubik, Chairman	- - -	Temple, Rt 3
Lee Hoelscher, Secretary	- -	Burlington, Rt 1
Jerry E. Hojl, Director	- - -	Temple, Rt 3
A.W. Goistman, Director	- - -	Burlington, Rt 1
Emil Sell, Director	- - - -	Burlington, Rt 1

There will be a meeting at the School House in Cenaville next Wednesday evening at 8:00 p.m., June 20th, and next Friday night, June 22nd a meeting will be held at the same time at the School House in Moody. A discussion of the work being done, showing picture slides of the work, and erosion in this area will be given at these meetings.

It is urged that all farmers who have terracing machines belonging to the Soil Erosion Service please put them to use as quickly as possible so that other farmers may use them. There are fifty machines in the field, and with the many requests coming in it is necessary that farmers who have the machines finish their

work just as soon as possible so that their neighbors can use the machines.

Permanent Soil Erosion Staff is composed of the following.

H.V. Goib, Regional Director

V.W. Woodman, Chief Agronomist

H.O. Hill, Chief Agricultural Engineer

B.L. Marshall, Assistant Agronomist

W.F. Saage, Assistant Agronomist

W.J. Neumann, Extension Agent

Harvey Oakes, Soils Expert

A.W. Groves, Agricultural Engineer

George D. Freeman, Assistant Agricultural
Engineer

M.L. Bryant, Surveyor

T. Wright Neal, Surveyor.

All of these men are ready and anxious at all times to talk with you and to cooperate in any way possible in helping you work out your farming problems.

